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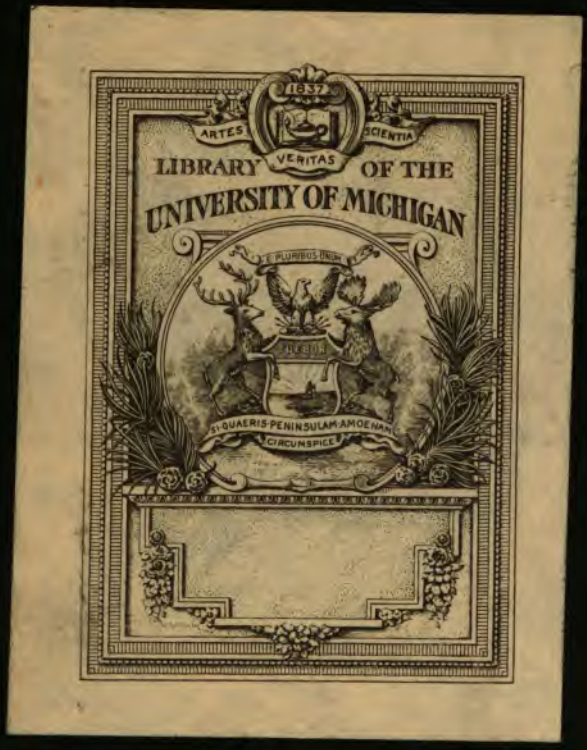

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THE MYTHE OF LIFE

Four Sermons

71-337

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION

ON

THE SOCIAL MISSION OF THE CHURCH

BY

CHARLES WILLIAM STUBBS, M.A.

Vicar of Granborough; Author of "Village Politics"

Gedenke zu Leben.—GOETHE

London

MACMILLAN AND CO.

1880

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IN ALL REVERENCE

I Dedicate

TO THE MEMORY OF TWO GREAT TEACHERS,

FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE,

AND

GUISEPPE MAZZINI,

THESE FAINT ECHOES OF SOME OF THE LESSONS THEY TAUGHT.

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THE SOCIAL MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

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"The Church, it seems to me, exists in the world as a witness to mankind that there is a continual, Divine, gracious government over it; as a witness to each nation that God is not less a King over it than He was over the Jews: that there has been a more complete revelation of His government, of the mode in which it is carried on, of the purposes which it designs to accomplish, than that which was made in the old time; but one which does not in the least set that revelation aside, or make it obsolete for us. The Church is to tell men, that the more completely Divine any government is, the more human it is; that it belongs to all common circumstances, ordinary interests, actual business. The Church is to tell men, that if God was a Redeemer of old, He is a Redeemer now; that if He was the Judge of Kings, priests, and nobles in old times—if He called them to account for their cruelties, punished them for their superstitions, reproved them for their exactions,—He does so still. The Church is to tell men that if God in other days took cognizance of the bag of deceitful weights, and of the sins of the employer who kept back by fraud the wages of the labourer, He does so still. The Church is to teach men that society exists for the sake of the human beings who compose it, not to further the accumulation of capital which is only one of its instruments. The Church is to declare that any civilization which is not founded upon this godly principle will come utterly to naught; that all the real blessings which have flowed from it, have proceeded from the acknowledgment of this principle; all the curses which have accompanied the growth of wealth and luxury from the forgetfulness of it. The Church is to declare that the spiritual and eternal kingdom which God has prepared for them that love Him is about men now, and that they may enter into it; and that His government of this spiritual and eternal world does not make Him less interested for the earth which He has formed for the habitation of man, in which He watches over him and blesses him, and which He desires that he should till and subdue, according to the command which He gave him on the creation day. To bring these truths practically home to the minds and hearts of human beings, is, it seems to me, the great function of a Church. And this function, I believe, the Church of England has in some respects a special call to perform, and can if she will perform most effectually."—MAURICE.

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THE SOCIAL MISSION OF THE CHURCH.*

AT a Conference at which I was present last year in St. Paul's Chapter-house, between workmen and employers and clergymen, one of the leaders of the workmen, speaking of the relation of the Church to social problems, expressed the following opinion: "*The Clergy are honest and hard-working on their own lines. But we want them to take a new line. We are in presence of a social breakdown; and I say that as matters stand, for practical purposes, to me and my duty, in every day life, the bulk of the Clergy, of*

* A paper read at Oxford, May 27th, 1880, at the invitation of the Missionary Committee of New College.

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all denominations, are of the least possible use in the world to me and mine."

The man who said this was no blatant agitator, bent on proving the rude independence of his mind by the rashness with which he asserted its conclusions. He was one of the most trusted spokesmen of the workmen of England, a man whose decisions in the frequent arbitrations, in which he has conducted in their behalf in trade disputes, are marked, not only by independence of character, but by judicial fairness of mind. Nor was the sentiment uttered with the slightest tone of disrespect to the Clergy whom he was addressing.

It was, in fact, I am sure, the frank expression of an honest opinion.

Now I venture to think that that opinion is shared by a much larger proportion of the graver and more thoughtful of the working classes in this country, than many of the Clergy are at all apt to suppose. They are quite aware, of course, most of them, that no subjects are so interesting to working-men as what are called "Social" questions. But I doubt very much whether the Clergy at all sufficiently

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realise how intimately in the minds of working-men conceptions of practical Christianity are apt to be associated with these social questions, or how general is the assumption on their part that in its power of bringing such questions within the range of common religious teaching is to be found the true "*note*" of a standing or a falling church.

These opinions are not, however, very surprising, nor ought they to be regretted.

For surely it is not an ignoble ambition to hope that the National Church, whose servants we are for Christ's sake, "*who both died and rose and revived that He might be Lord of the Living*," should find in the direction of social amelioration new channels for the exercise of the Divine wisdom of her inherited experience and the Divine strength of her comprehensive communion?

It is in this belief, at any rate, that I venture, in response to your invitation that I should address you on some subject connected with the practical work of a parish priest, to ask your consideration of one or two of those great social problems, which I at least, whether among Sheffield workmen in a parish of

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20,000, or among Buckinghamshire labourers in a parish of 350, have found it quite impossible as a clergyman to ignore.

I must of necessity I fear, in the time at my disposal, be somewhat fragmentary, and must break anywhere into the subject.

I.—Take first the question which is naturally suggested by the allusion with which I set out, that of the relation of the Church to labour questions. The Conference to which I alluded was one of a series of similar meetings promoted by a committee of Clergy during the last few years, and of which the Conference at Oxford, on the subject of glebe allotments, at the beginning of this year was one, and at which I believe some of you were present. As a result of those Conferences the Committee are about to publish a letter to the Clergy* on the subject of Labour-organizations, in the hope that they may be able to induce a larger number of their brethren to pay attention to the subject.

* This letter and other publications in connection with the work of the Committee may now be obtained on application to the Secretary, 9, Fisher-street, Red Lion-square, W.C.

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As that letter has not yet been issued, and as I am to a certain extent responsible for its sentiments, I will venture to quote its words in preference to my own :—

"Trade disputes have undoubtedly attained an importance which will not allow their existence to be ignored. Setting aside their effect on the commerce of the country, their influence on the relations of the two great classes of capitalists and producers, is a fact which must force itself on the attention of clergymen. The nation is threatened with a division of masters and men into two opposite camps. The clergy, as the natural peace-makers, are deeply interested in the causes and remedies of this division.

"It is undeniable that popular opinion has in the main hitherto sided with the masters, whilst the men have been supposed to be more or less in the wrong.

"1. Because Strikes and Trades-unions have been held to be economical mistakes.

"2. Because disturbances in trade have been attributed wholly to their action.

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"3. Because it is alleged that they act tyrannically, and in restraint of individual liberty.

"The clergy have for the most part endorsed this opinion, and they are hardly to be blamed, if, misled by acknowledged authorities, they have sided with the masters. It is, however, specially incumbent on them to examine whether any prepossessions created by a natural sympathy with the class to which they belong have prevented them from weighing impartially the arguments used on behalf of the working-class.

"1. A change is now coming over the method of political economists, which renders this examination the more necessary. Political economy has been hitherto treated almost exclusively in reference to the abstract laws which govern trade. It has never been denied that the operation of such laws, as the law of supply and demand, was largely to be assisted by human co-operation, or modified by human action. Attention has, however, been mainly directed to the abstract law. Political economy is now being studied in the application of the science to human action, attention being directed to the

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modifications in the statement of those laws, which a more careful inquiry into the disturbances caused by human action reveals.*

"2. It does not fall within the province of these remarks to dwell at length on instances. But it may be noted that attention has specially been called to the fact that the flow of capital to businesses which seem more than ordinarily lucrative, has been acknowledged to have as much effect in reducing profits as the Trades-unions, which have been hitherto credited with this result. It has further been remarked that the spread of Labour-organizations in all countries must very largely diminish the force of the argument so freely used that Trades-unions are driving trade out of one country in particular.

"3. That there have been instances in which the Trades-unionists have pressed hardly on non-

* "*As long as conclusions are deduced from abstract assumptions, propositions which only affirm tendencies will be taken to represent facts; and theorems which would hold under certain conditions will be announced as universally true.*" See Ingram's Presidential Address to the Political Economy Section of the British Association, 1878 (Longman and Co.), a paper which those interested in the subject cannot too carefully study.

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unionists is not denied. It is a fact, however, that the legal recognition (for which they long strove) and closer contact with public opinion have reduced the evils of Trades-unions to a minimum, whilst their support of non-unionists in times of strikes may fairly be set on the other side. Interference with the liberty of others is always dangerous, but it has been claimed for Trades-unionists that their leaders have been the men who, being the most intelligent of the class, had most to lose by the establishment of a uniform rate of wages. It must, however, be stated that they deny that their rules tend to reduce all workmen to one level; and assert that they merely wish to provide that no man shall sell his labour at a price injurious to the trade at large. They propose to create a minimum wage for all, not to limit the maximum to be earned by an individual.

"It is to be hoped that the next few years will not pass away without the discovery of some means of bringing into harmonious working the two interests now opposed. Your help is earnestly desired to promote the establishment of this concordat.

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"It seems to be specially the function of the Clergy, as belonging, as a rule, to the class which finds the capital by which labour is set to work, and yet as bound by the most solemn ties to the class which lives by its own productive labour, to stand between the disputants.

"It is to be feared that the natural prepossessions due to class sympathy have been allowed to degenerate into prejudices against the working-class views of the question, in consequence of the fact that this class has been, rightly or wrongly, identified to a great extent with attacks on the Church-establishment.

"It is surely the duty of members of a profession, whose office it is to preach the gospel of forgiveness, to guard themselves against the adoption of a course which would contradict their preaching. In no better way can we prove that we believe in the higher truths we preach than by showing a generous spirit to those who may, through misapprehension, have opposed us.

"If it be held that Labour-organizations have still erroneous tendencies, it is yet clear that the

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existence of such error should induce those of other classes to seek communication with them, rather than to hold aloof. The decision on which side the balance of truth lies can only be arrived at by a free interchange of opinions. It seems to be the special and inherited function of the Clergy to maintain an impartial attitude, using their influence to moderate those exaggerated claims and views which arise out of class-feeling.

"It is also to be feared that in our desire to raise a class deprived of many of the benefits we enjoy, we have been somewhat unmindful of the fact that without the two levers of union and hope no such elevation is possible.

"In their search after union, from which Trade-societies have taken their name, there may have been mistakes. It is our business to set before them, from the wider point of view to which we claim to have attained, the highest and widest idea of brotherhood as the basis of all true union."

II.—Then again, take the great question of Pauperism. That is a subject which, in one of its aspects at least, no one can deny to be the special

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concern of the ministry of the Church, one of the orders of that ministry having taken its origin in the necessity of properly dealing with it.

The duty of almsgiving is one which has been peremptorily insisted upon by the Church in all ages and all countries. And certainly with regard to no other duty has the Church been so successful in getting itself obeyed. And yet what has been the practical result? Those who are competent to speak have been telling us lately pretty plainly that, so far as the actual mitigation of pauperism is concerned, the greater part of all our philanthropic energy has been simply wasted.

"*The specifically philanthropic*," one writer tells us, "*have been among the saddest mischief-makers that complicated modern society has nourished in its bosom.*"

"*Look at pauperism, how we have fed and fostered it;—how we shrank from and spoiled and neutralised the one really scientific piece of legislation which England can boast of, the New Poor-Law as first proposed;—how we have kept up and added to those old mediævally conceived charities, which might have been innoxious under altogether different conditions, but*

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which now make mendicancy almost the most profitable trade a miscellaneous town population can pursue. . . . . Read and think how the sin and folly of the charitable and religious have combined to convert the east end of London into about the most unmanageable heap of squalor and destitution, drunkenness, imposture and artificial wretchedness on earth."

It would of course be easy to multiply evidence collected from many different directions.

Let me illustrate it however from my own present experience as the vicar of a rural parish. To a country parson, the question of the prevention of pauperism comes home in a very practical manner indeed. I am the vicar of a country parish in which more than seventy per cent. of the population are potential paupers—that is to say, that out of some seventy families in the village more than fifty are either actual or prospective recipients of the bounty of the poor-law. I have not a single labouring man past work in my parish who is not either in the workhouse or in receipt of out-door relief. When I lived among Sheffield workmen, I used sometimes to come across people who asserted that they would rather starve

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than receive parish pay. I have never even heard of such a case in Buckinghamshire. I fear I have hardly a labourer in my parish who, if he were sick or out of work, would not welcome the visit of the relieving officer. Failing the "wages of work," the Bucks labourer learns to think of "the wages of the parish" as his of right. It is a standing grievance with him just now that the Board of Guardians should compel a man in full pay to contribute towards the support of his indigent parent. The fact is not surprising when one thinks of the physical conditions under which even such apparently elementary virtues as filial obedience and parental love must find their nourishment. We have fifty cottages in the village; but we have not one labourer's home with three bedrooms. We have seventeen with only one. Our death-rate, which is generally so accurate an index of social condition, sounds satisfactory: it is only eighteen per 1000; but then one-third of our deaths are infants under the age of one. I need not, however, multiply deplorable statistics of that kind. I merely mention these as an explanation of the kind of stand-point from which, as a country parson, one

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comes to the consideration of this question—"*What can I do to improve the social condition of my people? How shall I encourage habits of thrift? How discourage pauperism?*" Something, no doubt, may be done, by a reformed administration of the poor-law itself. The village pauper is the creature of the poor-law; and to get a new creature you must possibly first have a regenerated poor-law. But that will not be enough. Instead of paupers we want to rear a race of thrifty labourers. But we can't make men thrifty, any more than we can make them sober, by Act of Parliament. Men can rise only by one means—the exercise of self-denial; and no Act of Parliament can enact that. Something also may doubtless be done by preaching thrift as a religious obligation. And we shall succeed with individuals. But if we are to influence the class, we must do something more than preach. I do not mean to imply that the labouring class are less likely to be influenced by the religious motive than any other class of the nation. Religion does not go by classes, or, if it does, my sympathies go very much with Mr. Bright's dictum in that respect. Nor does the dis-

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position to save go by classes either—at least, not quite in the way that some people would have us suppose. It used to be rather a commonplace of speakers upon thrift to talk of the improvidence of the lower classes, as if there were no spendthrifts elsewhere. Lord Derby did something to set matters right in that respect, when he pointed out at the Mansion House last March that it was the middle-class who saved, the upper and the lower who did not. It would, perhaps, have been a truer generalisation, or rather a completer expression of his generalisation, to say that those classes who are engaged in what the political economists technically call "*productive*" enterprises save, those who are dependent on fixed wages or salaries or stipends do not. The manufacturer, the banker, the tradesman, the business man, in fact, whose effort it is to turn over his capital as many times a year as possible, these are the people who have built up the saved capital of England, these are the people who save. The salaried or wage classes, on the other hand, among whom, of course, I would include the professional man as well as the manual worker, the barrister and

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the clergyman, the lawyer and the doctor, the artisan and the peasant, the men of fixed incomes, whether you call them stipends or salaries, or fees or wages, these are the people who do not save. Of course, I am speaking of the class, not of the individual. But then we should remember it is the rule of the business man to invest his savings. It is, in fact, his business to do so. Whereas it is only the exception of the professional man or the labourer to "*insure his life.*" Insurance is the special device of the already thrifty individual. In a word, the people who can "*turn over their money*" save; the people who can only "*lay by their money*" do not. Now here, it appears to me, is a principle which, as a country parson, I cannot afford to ignore in any attack that I may attempt upon the pauperism of my parishioners. There is a stronger motive to save created by the desire of investment in the present than by the desire of insurance against the future. In other words, I shall be more sure of success in my attempt to encourage thrift and frugality among my people if I can show them any means of lucrative investment open to those of them who will exercise

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self-denial and economy, than if I were merely to point out to them the advantages of insuring against the probable misfortunes of the future. It is not, I need hardly say, that I would discourage such efforts at insurance. Penny banks, medical and sick clubs, provident dispensaries, clothing clubs, life insurance societies, all these, of course, are to be encouraged; they are, indeed, the "*working plant*," so to speak, of any well-ordered parish. But I still maintain that we do not do well to neglect that incentive to saving which is created by the opportunity of the direct, present investment of savings. And that opportunity may, I think, best be found for the rural labourer in the occupation and cultivation of land. Mr. Blackley's scheme of National Insurance is admirable. It seems possible that some day it may even be carried out, for it has evidently succeeded in firing the imagination of the poor-law reformer. But one thing I am afraid it does not succeed in doing. It does not fire the imagination of the agricultural labourer. The opportunity of occupying land does, and therefore, as it seems to me, it is in providing that opportunity that we find the natural starting-point, in any

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successful scheme for the depauperisation of the labouring population. After all, land is the most natural savings bank of the rural labourer. It is a bank which he understands. He is familiar with its working. He knows something of its system of deposits, its method of exchange, the nature of its reserve fund, of its risks, of the rates of interest which it offers, the value of its securities. In these days of land agitation it may, perhaps, be well to guard myself against any misapprehension. I have no sympathy with revolutionary methods of land reform. Glad as I should be to see the agricultural labourers of England in possession of that incentive to thrift, which is created in the bosom of the French or Belgian peasant by the sense of landed possession; anxious as I am to see such a reform of our land laws as may very largely widen the circle in which the responsibilities of landed property may be exercised; firmly as I believe in the valuable conservative forces which result to any State from a wide extension of property in the soil—still I have no belief in the success of any scheme for the compulsory establishment of peasant proprietorship. At the

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same time it does seem to me little less than absurd that when we are seeking for means of developing the virtue of thrift in our labouring population, we should shut our eyes to the means by which that virtue has been created in the most thrifty race in Europe. I think we country clergy have a special responsibility in this respect. By our position the majority of us are, if not landlords, at least land-holders. We form, in fact, I believe, about a fourth of the resident landed proprietors of the country. Like Tennyson's "*Northern Farmer*," therefore, "*we owe a duty to the land.*" Would it not be possible for us, therefore, I would ask, so to manage the property of which we are trustees, that we might give to the rural labourer once more that responsibility of property, from which he has gradually been divorced by the combined action of our land customs and our poor-law? I will not now enter into the practical working of such a scheme, further than to refer you to the Report of the Conference at Oxford, to which I have already referred.*

* "Glebe Allotments and Co-operative Small Farming," by the present writer. (Poulton, Aylesbury.)

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One word only will I say finally on this subject. No scheme for the abolition of pauperism among the rural poor can be successful which does not commence by setting before them an "*attainable point of hope.*" The root virtues of a manly character—self-reliance, self-help, independence, ambition—will never grow in the hard soil of a day-labourer's life, unless they be first watered from the perennial spring of hope. To transpose the old proverb, "*While there is hope there is life.*" Let us find a means of implanting this principle in the bosom of the agricultural labourer, and we may succeed in changing even the dull, grey monotony of his existence into one of—

Life, full life,
Full-flowered, full-fruited, reared from homely earth,
Rooted in duty, and through long calm years,
Bearing its load of healthful energies,
Stretching its arms on all sides: fed with dews
Of cheerful sacrifice and clouds of care.

III.—Closely connected with the subject of Pauperism is the Sanitary question, and one which, in my opinion at least, the parish priest cannot afford to ignore. There seems to be a special fitness, more-

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over, in such a public duty as that of popularising sanitary science, being undertaken by the Church of Christ; for it cannot be forgotten that it was in a very great measure owing to the influence which the Church exerted upon society in the early ages of Christianity, that not only checked but actually threw back the advance that had already been made by society in the knowledge of sanitary science. There is no doubt whatever that up to the time when the Christian Church began to exercise a real influence upon the progress of events in Europe, the immense importance of due attention on the part of the State to the question of public health had been very generally acknowledged.

The vast monuments of aqueducts, streets, and sewers, the remains of baths and fountains in Italy and Greece, abundantly prove what great care had in old times been taken in this respect. In Rome, as we know, there existed laws which enforced the cleansing and repairing of drains and sewers, and a special officer was empowered to see that those laws were properly enforced. State physicians, answering very much to what we should call

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"*public health officers*," existed in almost every town of the empire, in number proportionate to the population. In the largest towns there were ten of these officers, each superintending a district or subdivision; in towns of the second order there were seven, and in the smaller towns five. Collectively these State physicians formed a college, or general medical council, whose duty it was to supervise everything in connection with the health of the citizens. What we know, too, of the construction, not only of the public buildings but also of the private houses of the Romans, show them to have been built not without knowledge of the requisites of free ventilation and good drainage. The splendid ruins of aqueducts, still in many cases partly used for their original purposes, attest the munificence with which the chief element, at any rate of public health, was supplied.

Gradually, however, under the influence of Christian teaching, all this became changed. Owing to an utter misconception of doctrine, all proper care for the human body, and as a consequence, all due attention to those conditions upon which the good health of

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that body depends, became neglected. It was not that the Church of Christ was callous to the sufferings of humanity, or neglectful of the claims of the body, when once that body had become affected by disease or racked by pain; on the other hand, the Church was foremost to alleviate such suffering and pain. But it was that, regarding bodily health as simply nothing in comparison with the paramount importance of the health of the soul, the conditions necessary to the former were ignored. It would, in fact, almost appear as if the care for the sick and needy, which was in one sense so characteristic a feature in the working of the Christian Church, was accepted rather as a duty, meritorious chiefly on account of the distasteful and unpleasant self-discipline which it imposed upon the benefactor, than from any idea of the possible good that might come to the sufferer by his cure and restoration to health. The very same men indeed who, in their devotion to good works and deeds of mercy, were the first to institute hospitals * for the reception of

* A statement made some time ago by Bishop Lightfoot, in a speech at the opening of the Throat and Ear Hospital, to the effect that "*hos-*

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the sick and suffering, had yet, as we know, so little idea of the true nature of disease, that upon the occurrence of any epidemic they immediately received it as an outbreak of God's special anger, to be averted only by prayer and penitence. How great an influence this pernicious doctrine has exerted in retarding the progress of truer conceptions of the nature and cause of disease, it is unnecessary to dwell upon here.

pitals were the creation of Christianity," was taken exception to by the Rev. A. L. Green, a Jewish Rabbi. Mr. Green, quoting the term "*several house*," in 2 Kings xv. 5, which, he says, is acknowledged by many theologians to bear the construction of "*free hospital*," and drawing attention to the fact that the Hebrew prophets, being moral teachers of the people, also exercised curative functions, claims for Judaism, and more especially for the Jewish Scriptures, the first place in the teaching of the Divine laws of universal charity. "*The modern hospital*," he maintains, "*has grown out of the* Domus Dei *institutions established for sanitary purposes at our chief ports during the period of the Crusades. It was then found necessary to establish such houses to serve as quarantine for those soldiers of the faith who brought little back with them to Europe except the plague; and gradually the character of such and kindred institutions took the form, and in very modern times, of hospitals,—the hospice became the infirmary.*" Bishop Lightfoot replied to this, very justly, "*that however beneficent may be the lessons of humanity taught in the Old Testament, it seems to be a broad fact, written across the face of history, that the name and power of Jesus of Nazareth first made these lessons 'current coin' among the civilised nations of the world;*" and

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During the last twenty years, however, an immense progress has been made. At the present time sanitary science, or the science of preventive medicine as it may well be called, occupies a foremost place in the public attention. Much, however, yet remains to be done. The connection between bad sanitary arrangement and bad health is now

cites Mr. Lecky ("*European Morals*," ii., p. 82) in support of his main propositions that public hospitals did not exist prior to Christianity. A correspondent, however, of the *Daily News* asserts that they existed in India long before Christianity appeared in the world. "*Among the edicts of King Asôka (fourth century* B.C.), *which still exist, inscribed on pillars and graven in the living rock, there occurs one which commands that 'medical aid' should be established throughout his kingdom, together with medicaments of all sorts which are suitable.*" Nearly seven hundred years after Asôka's death, the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hian visited India, and found hospitals flourishing at Asôka's city of Patua. "*The nobles and landowners of this country have founded hospitals in the city, to which the poor of all countries, the destitute, the cripples, the diseased, may repair for shelter. They receive every kind of requisite help gratuitously. Physicians inspect their diseases, and according to their cases, order them food and drink, decoctions and medicine,—everything, in fact, which may contribute to their ease. When cured, they depart at their own convenience*" ("*Travels of Fa-Hian*," Beal's ed., p. 107). To this we may add that Seneca ("*De Ira*," lib. i. cap. 16) speaks of institutions called *valetudinaria*, which may, however, have been only private infirmaries. The opinion that the Romans had public hospitals will be found discussed in a book called "*Collections relative to the Systematic Relief of the Poor*" (London, 1815); cp. also "*Tacit Annal.*," xii. 58; "*Pliny*," v. 7, x. 79.

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largely admitted, but it is not fully admitted. Public opinion is partially awake to the importance of the question; it is almost convinced that it is time that something should be done, but it is not quite thoroughly awake or thoroughly convinced. It remains, at any rate, that public opinion should be educated to understand clearly what that "*something*" is, so that it may be prepared to carry out intelligently the various plans which finally may be agreed upon as necessary to ensure a better condition of national health. One of the chief needs of the present day in the matter of sanitary science, it has been truly said, is, "*by the production of facts and the collision of reasonings, to take a series of the most important subjects affecting the welfare and happiness, not of England alone, but of the whole human race, out of the domain of opinion into that of knowledge.*"

Now here it appears to me the Church has a great opportunity. If it will but recognise that opportunity, and the duty which that opportunity imposes, it may be the means of affording invaluable aid to the nation. When one remembers,

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on the one hand, that immense army of human beings annually stricken down in this country by preventible disease,—in plain words, slain either by culpable carelessness or by ignorance scarcely, if at all, less culpable; and when one remembers, on the other hand, the immense engine of influence that might be brought to bear by the pulpits of this land, it does indeed seem lamentable that there should be any hesitation on the part of the Churches to embark in the great work, not only of denouncing that carelessness, but also of instructing that ignorance.

And not only is that so, I think, for the reason which I stated,—namely, that the progress of society in sanitary knowledge was in the early days of Christianity checked and retarded by the action of the Church,—but for reasons more forcible perhaps as bearing directly upon the present position and need of the Church itself. For there can be no doubt, I should imagine, that few things tend so much to neutralise any good effect that might be expected to result from the influence of Christian teaching upon the great masses of the people as

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the actual physical condition under which those masses pass their existence. Christian teaching must be all but thrown away upon people who are living under conditions where the first principles of morality, cleanliness, and decency are simply impossible. Do any of you remember the words that Charles Dickens put into the mouth of his hero in "*Nobody's Story*"? They embody, I am sure, the experience of scores of hard-worked clergymen:—"*Oh, what avails it, missionary, to come to me—a man condemned to residence in this fætid place! Give me my first glimpse of heaven through a little of its light and air: give me pure water: help me to be clean: lighten this heavy atmosphere and heavy life, and then I will hear of Him Whose thoughts were so much with the poor, and Who had compassion with all human sorrow.*"

To any one who believes, as I do most firmly, that the body of man is not only the shrine which contains the soul, but a shrine which, under certain conditions, fashions and modifies the soul itself, there can appear no task more noble, no aim more worthy of the energies of any Church, than that

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of removing those conditions of ignorance, and squalor, and disease, which are the chief obstacles at present in the way of man's attainment to that fulness and perfection of stature which is the true height of his destiny.

IV.—One other subject I will briefly touch upon in conclusion. We may perhaps hope that in time the Church may have learnt new methods of coping with the social difficulties that face us, may succeed in ameliorating the condition of the great human mass with which it has to deal. In the meantime, however, the question arises, "*Can nothing be done to brighten and beautify the life as it at present exists?*" This is a question which must force itself in one form or another upon every clergyman, and not least, if I may judge by my own experience, upon the country parson. The absence of real pleasure from the life of the village labourer is one of the saddest experiences of the country parish priest. "*We live,*" Wordsworth says, "*by admiration, hope, and love,*" and yet where in the soil of the day labourer's life is there room for those root graces of spiritual existence?

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Village life is dull. In winter time especially the hearth of the village ale-shop is too often the only social centre of warmth and light and colour—and of much also, I fear, which is only not dull because it is wicked. What does the average villager know of the pleasures of books, of pictures, of music, of art, of conversation, of all in fact that makes the social life of the classes above him glad and bright?

And yet, surely he ought to know something of the pleasure which God intended that beautiful things should give him. He ought not to be satisfied—at any rate we ought not to be satisfied for him—with only labour and sleep and feeding. When the work is done, and the sleep is over, and the eating is finished, shall not the man himself presently wake up, and find his spirit afterwards an hungred, and know that it lives not by bread alone?

There is a story told of a clergyman, who wishing to impress an agricultural labourer with some idea of the blessedness of heaven, asked him, what he thought would be a leading question, "*What is your highest idea of human happiness?*" and got for

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answer, "*A public-house fire roaring up the chimney, and a fiddle going.*"

One would like not to exaggerate, and yet if we are quite honest with ourselves, is it not just a little difficult to know where to place, in the somewhat coarse picture which from experience our imagination is apt to draw of a labourer's idea of pleasant things, the softening lines of beauty and refinement?

And yet surely the ideal of a villager's life need not of necessity be coarse and unlovely?

Can we do nothing to make it a little less colourless and sad? Can we not break its monotony and commonplace with some stimulant which shall not be vicious, with some pleasure which shall not be merely gross and sensual?

These are questions, thank God, for which many earnest hearts are seeking an answer.

"*Let us throw open our churches,*" it is said, "*restored and made as beautiful as art can make them, well lighted and warmed; let us give our people cheerful services, heartier music, simpler preaching.*"

"*Let us open workmen's clubs, and temperance coffee-rooms, public-houses in fact where the interest of*

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the public, not the interest of the publican, is the first thought; where the labouring man may have if he will good food and drink, as well as no food and bad drink; where, in a word, he may no longer be forced to ask with Falstaff of old—'Can I not take mine ease in mine inn, but I must have my pocket picked?'"

"Let us have penny readings and popular science lectures and village concerts and dramatic entertainments"

To all these good answers I want to add one more.

"Let us make our village schoolrooms into picture galleries and museums of art."

The thing after all is not so Utopian as perhaps at first it may sound.

Some sort of germ of art does already exist in many of our schools. Some attempt is already made to brighten the look of the bare walls, by hanging up beside the usual maps and diagrams, illuminated texts of Scripture, coloured German prints in illustration of Bible story—the murder of Abel, Noah's Ark on the top of Ararat, Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt, a graphic illustration

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of the animals of the world, showing clearly the relative size of the whale and the common housefly, occasional chromo-lithographs from old Christmas numbers of the *Illustrated London News*,—these things, beside their purely didactic purpose, do in some degree also serve to adorn the room and make it brighter and pleasanter for the children.

Well, why not, I would ask, carry this effort after beautiful things a little farther, with perhaps just a little loftier ideal of the province of art as a popular teacher?

Let us try to get into our schools things specially designed for æsthetic purposes—pictures and other works of art selected for the specific end of training the taste of the children. Very beautiful reproductions of good pictures are to be bought now-a-days at no very great price. Portraits of great and good men, of the heroes of our country and other countries, should be hung upon the walls, with some of their wise words or description of their noble deeds written beneath them. They would be a perpetual memory to many of the children, inciting them also to noble endeavour. Busts and casts of

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beautiful objects might also be placed round the room. A long list of the fine things that are to be got in this way, at the smallest expense, all works of high art, many of which we would place in our drawing-rooms, may be seen in the *Art Directory*, published by the Science and Art Department, price *6d.* With a schoolroom made thus beautiful in the way I have suggested, I would endeavour to have some lessons which should distinctly have the object of teaching the children to observe and love and understand the beautiful things of God's world of nature and man. Here, again, we have the germ of such teaching in our box of form and colour, which all our elementary schools are required to possess, and which so few of our schools, I fear, know how rationally to employ.

But if the schoolrooms are to be made homes of art, in the first instance, for the children's sake, they may be so perhaps for the parents' sake also. Such rooms as I have imagined adorned with pictures and objects of art, well-lighted and warmed, might surely prove centres of pleasant social intercourse for the men and women of our

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parishes, both rich and poor, and centres of something perhaps even higher than this. Everything that we can do to make people delight in rightness of form and beauty of colour, does something to break the power of that torpor of heart and torpor of mind, which are the Devil's two best servants, in his work of making hundreds of thousands of English labouring men irreligious drunkards.

"*Is it after all so very chimerical,*"—I quote, in conclusion, the words of Dr. Bridges,* to show you that I do not dwell alone in Utopia,—"*to conceive some rich man building somewhere in the east of London a somewhat stately room, not meaner, perhaps, in its proportions than the beautiful hall of the Reform Club—for this is to be a reform club too—and that the walls and corridors should be trusted to a painter and a sculptor for handling of the noblest subject that human imagination will ever be able to conceive—the growth of social life, symbolically treated as in Homer's 'Shield of Achilles,' and the series of great men who best represent the*

* "The Moral and Social Aspects of Health," a Lecture before the National Health Society.

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stream of the noblest human progress? Take, if you can find it, some grander programme for this purpose than is set forth in the historical calendar of Auguste Comte; or take that, if you can find, as I can find none better: there would be a large agreement between. every one on this head, whichever list was chosen Endow some reader to read at intervals from the great world poets; some musical choir to render such passages from the great musicians, as being simple and grand and tender, shall take the hearts of all that hear them captive; finally from time to time, let some man who knows, by a few simple words, point the moral of the whole—and would you not have in some such scheme as this a civilizing and in the truest sense a health-giving agency? Would it not conduce to the public health, in the narrowest and most superficial as in the widest sense of that word, that something of the pomp and stateliness and dignity and splendour of human life should be brought within reach of the humblest?"

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Sermon I.

THE MYTHE OF LIFE.

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"Life is a mission: duty therefore its highest law. In the comprehension of that mission and fulfilment of that duty lie our means of future progress, the secret of the stage of existence into which we shall be initiated at the conclusion of this earthly stage."—MAZZINI.

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I.

THE MYTHE OF LIFE.*

"They that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.'
—HEBREWS xi. 14.

IT is a little curious that this Tenth Book of the "Republic of Plato," which furnishes us with our subject to-night, commences with a disparagement of Poetry, and yet ends with one of the most beautiful and expressive poems of the old world. I am sure we cannot read the grand and solemn scenes of the Mythe of Er, in which, with an almost epic magnificence,

* The present Lecture was the last of a course of Ten Lectures on the "Republic of Plato," delivered on the Tuesday evenings during Lent and Easter, this year, in St. Jude's Church, Whitechapel.

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the pilgrimage of the human soul, its development and its destiny, is pictured, without feeling that we have to do with one who is not only a dialectician and a philosopher, but one who is both in expression and in thought a poet.

And yet, as I said, the book which closes with so grand an imaginative vision commences with an indictment of poetry.

"*Having come to years of discretion,*" Plato says, "*we know that poetry is not truth, and that a man should be careful how he tampers with falsehood, for there is a mighty issue at stake, the good or evil of the human soul. I have loved Homer ever since I was a boy; but much as I love the man, I love truth more, and therefore I must speak out.*"

The counts of his indictment are briefly these:— The poet is an imitator, not a creator. He cannot give to us reality itself, he can only image to us the appearance of things, even twice or thrice removed perhaps from the real things themselves. And what good can a mere imitator or mere image-maker do mankind? What laws, for example, did Greece ever receive from Homer? What practical

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notions or inventions, much less what "*way of life*"?

Then again, Poetry, he says, appeals to the weakest side of the soul—the emotions and the feelings—rather than to reason and to thought. It teaches us to lose self-control under affliction, to bewail our evil luck, to nurse our sorrows. When we hear Homer, or some other tragedian, reciting at length the sorrows of heroes, lamenting and beating their breasts, we sympathise with and admire the poet. And yet surely we ought not to feel pleasure in seeing another do what we would hate and abominate in ourselves. When we stumble we ought not, like children, to set up a cry, hugging the wounded part; but when the dice have once fallen, we should take the measures which Reason prescribes—not making a lament, but finding a cure.

And so, because it is only delightful, not useful; because it appeals to emotion, not to reason; because it can give us only an image of the truth, not the truth itself,—Poetry must, in a well-ordered state, be placed under sentence of exile. The

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second of these objections deserves a word or two of remark. The first, I think, we may safely pass by, or at least it will be sufficient to quote in answer to it the words of two modern poets.

To the question—"*What good has he done?*" which Plato asks concerning Homer, Mr. Ruskin, speaking of Shakespeare, says: "*To* do *any good, or* get *any good, in the common sense of good, was not to be within his permitted range of work. Not for him the founding of institutions, the preaching of doctrines, or the repression of abuses. Neither he nor the sun did, on any morning that they rose together, receive charge from their Maker concerning such things. They were both of them to shine on the evil and the good: both to behold unoffendedly all that was upon the earth, to burn unappalled upon the spears of kings, and undisdaining upon the reeds of the river.*" And the other saying is this, from Goethe: "*We must take care of the Beautiful, the Useful may take care of itself.*"

But the gravest charge which Plato brings against Poetry, he finds in the emotional spell which she exercises over the human soul. "*She will excite*

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and feed and strengthen the worthless part of the soul," he says, "*and will destroy the rational part.*"

That the emotional is the inferior faculty he has, of course, no doubt. That opinion depends upon his analysis of the human soul into the three elements of Reason, Spirit or Passion, and Appetite, which was doubtless commented upon in a previous lecture. Poetry will interfere, he thinks, with the due relationship of these three elements. She will exalt Emotion into the position where Reason ought to reign supreme.

Now without entering into the controversy concerning "universals" and "particulars," "opinions" and "sensations," which commentators will tell you is really at the root of Plato's position here,—indeed, without attempting to determine whether in this trinity of faculties the emotional comes before or after the rational,—it is plain that no sound concordat between the three faculties can be promoted by ignoring the legitimate claims of any one faculty.

We may well allow with Plato that the despotic reign of Emotion would be even more disastrous than the despotic reign of Reason. But all the

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more on that account we should say that in a sound system of education the training of the emotions can be as little safely neglected as the cultivation of the intellect. There were special reasons, no doubt, in the circumstances of his own age, which made the control of the emotional side of the Greek character seem to Plato the most pressing educational necessity. But who shall say that in our own modern age of industry, where the appetitive faculty is so markedly the dominant element in life, there is not an equal necessity to lay stress upon the cultivation of the emotional or affective side of man's nature? In our own country at any rate, where thousands are simply absorbed in a blind frenzy of competition, the active, energetic powers of human nature practically have matters all their own way. The Reason and the Emotion are for the most part but the ready servants of the commercial or the industrial appetite.

But if men are to practise virtue, it is not sufficient to convince their reason of its expediency. Intellect, after all, is neutral. It may tell us how a thing may be done, why a thing may be done;

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but it cannot impel us to do it. For that you want the emotional motive. To get men to practise virtue, you must make its exercise in some way an object of their affections. To make men virtuous, you must teach men to love virtue. "*We live*," Wordsworth says, "*by admiration, hope, and love.*" It is in those generous sympathies of our nature which teach us to take delight in whatever is good and lovely in nature or in human character; to give honour to it, and to strive to copy it; to foresee the better things to be reached hereafter by ourselves and for our neighbours, and to strive to help the world on towards attaining them; to believe in the loyalty and truth of neighbourly affection, and to strive in some measure by our actions to make the belief more general;—it is in these things that the treasures of true life consist.

Now will any one say that to reach this level of tone or temper we can any of us afford to neglect that source of inspiration which all true poetry supplies?

Indeed, if I were asked to define the function of poetry, I should be inclined to say that it was to idealise as much as possible our every thought,

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affection, and work. To idealise human life, and so far to elevate it, has not that been the work of all true poets from Homer down to the author of the "Epic of Hades" and the "Ode of Life"? The more prosaic our ordinary duties, the more need there is for such idealization, the more need there is to keep up the tone of our minds by frequent visits to that "imperial palace" where we may bless ourselves in silence for those—

"High instincts before which our mortal nature
Does tremble like a guilty thing surprised;
. . . those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which be they what they may
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet the master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the Eternal Silence; truths that wake
To perish never."

But it is not merely in the cultivation of a high tone of thought and feeling in ourselves that Poetry finds its function. It has, and I cannot but believe that it will have much more as the days go on, a great social work to do. The coming ages of

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industry will offer no less worthy subjects, we may well believe, for the genius of Poetry, than the bygone ages of conflict. In turning aside from the passions of war and battle to sing the praises of industrial chivalry and achievement, the poet may find "*new glories for the eloquent tongue*," subjects of inspiration far more essentially poetic in their nature; for there can indeed be no nobler function than to teach that the highest happiness of man is to be found in the culture of the neighbourly affections, the generous sympathies, the love of social justice, the zeal for public good.

"*In his efforts to accomplish this object*," writes one whom some think, and not perhaps unjustly, to be the greatest social philosopher that the world has seen since Plato, "*the poet will naturally be led to form prophetic pictures of the regeneration of man, viewed in every aspect that admits of being ideally represented. When it is understood that the sphere of Imagination is simply that of explaining and giving life to the conclusions of Reason, the severest thinkers will welcome its influence, because so far from obscuring reality, it will give greater distinctness to it*

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than could be given by science unassisted. Utopias have their legitimate purpose; . . . . . they form a class of poetry . . . which gives a foretaste of the beauty and greatness of the new life that is now offered to the individual, to the family, and to society, ... only, as in the case of all other products of the imagination, they must always remain subordinated to the actual laws of social existence. And thus, by giving a systematic sanction to this poetry, *as it may be called,* of politics, *most of the dangers which now surround it will disappear.*"

But to return to Plato. I think it is plain that however unsatisfactory may have been his opinion of the poets of his day, he himself at least was a poet in the sense of that conception of the poetic office which I have just quoted from Auguste Comte. Plato was essentially a Poet of Politics.

For it is not after all his logic, but his poetic and moral enthusiasm that has made Plato one of the greatest masters of virtue that the world has ever known. He creates in the heart of man a desire to live the just and the right life; not so much by proving, as this whole book of the Republic

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is an effort to do, that justice and virtue are the supreme happiness, but by the sympathy inspired by his own intense faith in the transcendent worth of those qualities.

One could not well perhaps have a better illustration of Plato's method in this respect than in that Mythe of Human Destiny with which the Republic closes. The great dialogue on human life and conduct could not well be brought to a close without leaving its author face to face with the solemn problem of man's destiny—the Enigma of Humanity—which has tried the hearts of the noblest and sincerest thinkers in all ages. Had Plato been only a philosopher, he must have acquiesced with his successors through twenty centuries, in regarding the problem as insoluble. But Plato was poet as well as philosopher. The arguments of pure reason might fail to prove to him the future of personal existence, at least as a conscious continuance of existence in the present. But the importunate questionings of the heart could not be silenced. Instinct, after all, was stronger than logic. "*To affirm confidently*," as he says elsewhere, "*would*

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become no reasonable man; but it is worthy of him to face peril boldly in the faith of the soul's immortality, for the peril is glorious." And so when logical processes fail, he is fain to make, as he terms it, "*a bold venture*," and to clothe his instinctive hopes for the future in the form of a Mythe.

The story takes the form of a legend said to have been related by Er, the son of Armenius, who, being killed in battle, was laid on his funeral pyre, but came to life again after twelve days, and told how he had seen in a trance the Judgment of the Dead and the mysteries of the other world.

To give you a fair idea of Plato's conception, I must quote somewhat fully. The translation I adopt is in the main that of Dr. Jowett. Er's story was "*that when he left the body his soul went on a journey with a great company, and that they came to a mysterious place, at which there were two chasms in the earth; they were near together, and over against them were two other chasms in the heaven above. In the intermediate spaces there were Judges seated, who bade the just, after they had judged them, ascend by the heavenly way on the right hand, having the signs*

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of the judgment bound upon their foreheads; and in like manner the unjust were commanded by them to descend by the lower way on the left hand; these also had the symbols of their deeds fastened on their backs. . . . . And he beheld and saw on one side the souls departing at either chasm of heaven and earth when sentence had been given on them; and at the two other openings, other souls, some ascending out of the earth dusty and worn with travel, some descending out of heaven clean and bright; . . . and they told one another of what had happened by the way, those from below weeping and sorrowing at the remembrance of the things which they had endured and seen in their journey of a thousand years under the earth; while those from above were describing heavenly delights and visions of inconceivable beauty."

Then he describes how the souls, after resting for seven days, came on the eighth to a place "*in colour like unto a rainbow*," only brighter and clearer, where the eight heavenly bodies—the sun, the moon, and the six planets—revolved each in its proper circle round a distaff of adamant, which rested on the knees of the goddess Necessity. Seated

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on thrones by her side were her daughters, the three Fates—Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos—singing of the Past, Present, and the Future, and guiding from time to time with their hands the revolving cycles, whose harmonious motion produces the music of the spheres.

"And when Er and the spirits arrived, their duty was to go at once to Lachesis; but first of all there came a prophet who arranged them in order; then he took from the knees of Lachesis the lots and samples of life, and going up to a high place, spoke as follows:—'Hear the words of Lachesis, the daughter of Necessity. Mortal souls, behold a new cycle of mortal life. Your genius will not choose you, but you will choose your genius; and let him who draws the first lot, first choose a life which shall be his destiny. Virtue is free, and as a man honours or dishonours her, he will have more or less of her; the chooser is answerable—God is justified!' When the Interpreter had thus spoken, he scattered lots among them, and each one took up the lot that fell near him. Then the Interpreter placed on the ground before them the samples of lives . . . . . all sorts of lives—of

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every animal, and of man in every condition. . . . . Most curious, he said, was the spectacle of the election —sad and laughable and strange, the souls generally choosing so as to avoid their own condition in a previous life."

And when all the souls had chosen their lives, their choice was made irreversible by the three sisters. Then they passed beneath the throne of Necessity, and journeyed to the plain of Forgetfulness, where they drank of the waters of the River of Unmindfulness.

"*Then after they had gone to rest, about the middle of the night there was a thunderstorm and an earthquake, and then in an instant they were driven all manner of ways, like stars shooting upwards, to their birth. Er himself was hindered from drinking the water. But in what manner or by what means he returned to the body he could not say, only in the morning, awaking suddenly, he saw himself lying on the pyre.*"

To the Christian, the solution of the great Enigma of Humanity which Plato offers in this Mythe will appear to fall far short of the Divine possibilities

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of individual dignity and social fellowship of which the Gospel of the Resurrection is the revelation. Still there is much in the teaching of the Mythe, with regard to Life's mission and its destiny, which, notwithstanding the long interval of twenty centuries, we in these days can in no sense be said to have outgrown. One at least of those lessons I may perhaps in conclusion briefly indicate.

The Distaff of Adamant upon which the whole fabric of existence revolves, lies on the knees of Necessity. Have we not here, as in a parable, that Reign of Law of which modern science has so much to tell us? All round the human race stand the fixed laws and the hard forces of nature, and the life of man—nay, the whole fabric of existence—is "*rounded*" by necessity. As a poet of our own day has said,—

> "*Necessity, and who shall dare*
> *Bring to* her *feet excuse or prayer.*
> *Howe'er we turn and pause and tremble—*
> *Howe'er we shrink, deceive, dissemble—*
> *Whate'er our doubting, grief, disgust,*
> *The hand is on us, and we must,*
> *We must, we must.*

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'Tis common-sense and human wit
Can find no better name than it,
Submit, submit!"

And yet by submitting man may learn to conquer or to guide. Those laws, in their action so unhasting yet so remorseless, are yet altogether beneficent to the man who is not satisfied to be a mere "*playing pawn at blindfold chess*," but strives to fashion his affections and will to move in harmony with them.

Indeed, what is all education but simply the right instruction of man in the knowledge of those laws which surround him, and the laws of his own nature —"*the intellectual laws on which God has made knowledge to depend; the moral laws on which He has made happiness to depend; the social and political laws on which He has made national prosperity and advancement to depend; the economic laws on which He has made wealth to depend; the physical laws on which He has made health to depend*"?

It was because Plato recognised this so clearly that his theory of education is not only in advance of the prevailing notions of his own time, but in

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one respect, at least, is in advance even of that of many modern philosophers and theologians. For to him is undoubtedly owing the distinction of being the first to perceive that education must comprehend the whole of life, and, indeed, could not even end there, but must be carried on into the future.

To Plato, the Ideal of Human Destiny was a life of ceaseless education.

And what higher ideal of life can there be than that even for the Christian?

It is true that we may speak of life as a "*state of probation.*" But it is not true, for it is a Calvinistic libel upon Christianity, to explain that as meaning that there is any natural antagonism between earth and heaven. "*The life that now is*" is something more than a pilgrimage through a wilderness of trial to a Paradise of reward. This earth is no mere sojourn of expiation—a vale of sorrows ever darkened by the evil wing of the Prince of the Power of the Air. Man's work has other value than that of furnishing a qualification for rest hereafter. The earth is of God; and man, who is in the image of God, has the duty laid upon him of forming this

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earth more and more into the image of "*the kingdom of heaven:*"

> "*He is sent forth upon the field of life*
> *To war with evil.*"

But the evil is to be combated not merely as a means of discipline for individual capacity and character, but as a recognised part of that "*fellow-work with God*" by which His great educational plan for the perfecting of the full stature of Humanity is to be wrought out. Both designs are, no doubt, part of God's plan—the perfection of the individual and the perfection of the race. But it may well be questioned whether those who, conceiving of Heaven only as a state to be gained hereafter, are mainly concerned with efforts to increase individual spirituality, are as truly co-operating with God's design, as those who, desirous of realizing somewhat more of the "*kingdom of heaven*" here on earth, strive to mend and beautify and guide humanity, to mitigate somewhat its sorrows here below, to extinguish its woes, to eradicate its vices—in a word, to combat for its salvation. It has been truly said: "*There is a*

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vast fund of hidden selfishness, or what at least has often the practical effect of such, in the idea of heaven as ordinarily conceived; and much of the tolerated misery of earth may be traced to it."

The idea of Plato is truer, and, as I at least think, more in accordance with that belief in the filial relations of man to a Heavenly Father which a greater than Plato has taught us.

Human life is a great educational problem working itself out according to the plan of God. In the development of that plan, each age of the world has its own special work to do,—a fresh term, so to speak, to disengage from the unknown quantities of the problem. The law of life for the race, as for the individual, is thus one of infinite progression and growth. Progress is not only a vital fact of human existence, it is its vital law. So to comprehend that law as to harmonise all the facts of life, is the office of Religion. For Religion is then only worthy of its name, when it furnishes man with a comprehensive scheme of duty in unison with all the facts of nature and existence.

How far for the race the direction of its line of

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progress is within human power we cannot say. For the individual it would seem that, within certain limits, the choice of his destiny is within his own hands.

"*Virtue is free—the chooser is answerable—God is justified*," were the words of Lachesis.

And as to the destiny hereafter, this at least the Mythe seems to tell us, that to the mind of Plato, as for the human soul there was a law of infinite growth and development, the fact of Death was a mere accident—an incident of life.

"*Death, there is not any death, only infinite change,*
Only a place of life which is novel and strange.
Life, what is life?—that it ceases with ceasing of breath!
Death!—what were Life without change but an infinite Death!"

Beyond the gates of death there lay, it is true, the awful contrasts of Retribution; but also in the farther distance the glorious vision of a progressive universe of souls—life beyond life, ever offering newer and higher ideals of attainable perfection.

"*Life following Life for ever!—for what if the sun*
Grew chilled and the universe cold, and the orbits undone,

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And all the great globes should fall back into chaos once more?
They would wake at a glance of the Light, as they wakened before:
There is no Death for ever."

And for the rest, may we not end with Plato?—

"*Wherefore my counsel is that, believing the soul to be immortal, and to possess the power of entertaining all evil as well as all good, we ever hold fast the upward road, and devotedly cultivate justice combined with wisdom; in order that we may be loved by one another and by the gods—not only during our stay on earth, but also when, like conquerors in the games collecting the presents of their admirers, we receive the prizes of virtue; in order that both in this life, and during the journey of a thousand years which we have described, we may never cease to prosper.*"

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Sermon II.

CHRISTIAN TIME SERVING.

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"A wealthy man addicted to his pleasure and his profits finds religion to be a traffic so entangled, and of so many peddling accounts, that of all mysteries he cannot skill to keep a stock going upon that trade. What should he do? Fain he would have the name to be religious; fain he would bear up with his neighbours in that. What does he therefore but resolve to give over toiling, and to find himself out some factor to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs: some divine of note and estimation that must be. To him he adheres, resigns the whole warehouse of his religion, with all the locks and keys, into his custody; and indeed makes the very person of that man his religion: esteems his associating with him a sufficient evidence and commendation of his own piety. So that a man may say his religion is now no more within himself, but is become a dividual movable, *and goes and comes near him according as that good man frequents his house. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him: his religion comes home at night, prays, is liberally supped, and sumptuously laid to sleep, rises, is saluted, and after the Malmsey, or some well-spiced beverage, and better breakfasted then He whose morning appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between Bethany and Jerusalem, his religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop, trading all day without his religion."*—MILTON.

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II.

CHRISTIAN TIME-SERVING.*

"*Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.*"—ROMANS xii. 11.

"BE *a down-right time-server*"! said an old bishop of our Church, preaching upon this text. The comment is somewhat startling. Nor is its appropriateness quite obvious at first sight. But it appears that there is another reading of the text found in several of the oldest manuscripts, which seems to alter materially the character of this well-known maxim of St. Paul.

"*Be servers of the time*"! (τῷ καιρῷ instead of τῷ κυρίῳ δουλεύοντες) is the translation of this new reading—"*Seize the present opportunity.*" At first per-

* Preached in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Coventry.

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haps to our ears the new version has not quite so inspiriting a sound as the old one. We naturally think of a "time-server," to say the least, as of one who is mean, servile, contemptible. Two hundred years ago, however, the word did not carry with it that idea. It was quite as often used in an honourable as a dishonourable sense. At any rate, if this new reading is the true one—and those who are competent to judge seem to think so—it is impossible for St. Paul to have meant his maxim to have anything mean or servile about it. Very likely some of the ancient proverbs, such as "*Carpe diem*," καιρον γνωθι, "*Take occasion by the forelock*," "Be the slave of opportunity," were in his mind, and he wished to christianise them. It was very like him to do so. He was very fond of "sanctifying," so to say, some shrewd worldly maxim. And I think it is so here. "*Be a down-right time-server*" means something very much the opposite of mean and paltry. Do your duty in the present, the duty which lies nearest you, as Carlyle used to say. Be earnest, religiously sincere at your daily work. Don't think religion has got to do only with the future. Learn to do

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your life-work, whatever it may be, as a Divine service. Be a down-right godly server of your time.

"Trust no future, howe'er pleasant,
Let the dead past bury its dead;
Act, act, in the living present,
Heart within and God o'erhead."

That is a reading of the text, I think, which no Christian need be ashamed to adopt.

It is a great puzzle, I know, to some people to know how rightly to adjust the claims of heaven and earth upon their thoughts and upon their time —how much to give to the duties and interests of the present, how much to preparation for the future; how much to spiritual matters, how much to secular; how much to devotion, how much to work.

Now this maxim of St. Paul is evidently an encouragement to those who solve the problem in this way, who say, the surest way to get to heaven is to think little about it; to do your duty in this world scrupulously and earnestly is the safest guarantee of ability to do duty in any world that is to come. Secular work after all is the best training-

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ground for the spiritual affections. Industrial religion is the true nurse of spiritual religion. First that which is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual.

I do not think that is quite a complete solution of the problem, but still I think it is perhaps the solution upon which, just at present, it is most useful to lay stress.

The practical business,—I do not say the ultimate end,—but the practical business of the religious instructor nowadays, it seems to me, is this:—to get men to regard their daily work as a religious matter, as in a very true sense a divine service: to make men see that whatever may be the spiritual aspects of religion, it has also its secular, its industrial side: in a word, to identify devotion with duty, and religion with goodness.

It is upon this aspect of our daily life-work that I propose to speak to you for a short time to-night, —what I might venture to call, perhaps, industrial religion, or Christian time-serving.

You will all remember, I am sure, the character of Caleb Garth in George Eliot's "Middlemarch." He seems to me an almost perfect example of what

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I call the industrially religious man. In many respects that book was a very melancholy one. Indeed, the character of Caleb Garth—the happy, eager, unselfish land-surveyor—is almost the only gleam of real sunshine in its pages. Let me quote to you one or two sentences from that scene at the Garths' breakfast-table, when Caleb has just received a letter offering him work—the management of Mr. Brookes' estates.

"*It is a fine bit of work!*" he says to his wife. "*A man without a family would be glad to do it for nothing. . . . It's a fine thing to come to a man, when he's seen into the nature of business: to have the chance of getting a bit of the country into good fettle, as they say, and putting men into the right way with their farming, and getting a bit of good contriving and solid building done, that those who are living and those who come after will be better for. I'd sooner have it than a fortune. I hold it the most honourable work there is.*"

Here Caleb laid down his letters, thrust his fingers between the buttons of his waistcoat, and sat upright; but presently proceeded, with some awe in his voice,

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and moving his head slowly aside, "*It's a great gift of God, wife.*"

"*It's a great gift of God.*"

I think Caleb Garth is almost my ideal Christian. He is so generous, so delicate-minded, so sensitively honourable, such a skilful workman. His great ambition is to "*set things to rights,*" and *that* is so Christian.

Why, what was Jesus Christ's work and mission in this world but just that?—to set things to rights—to put things in order. That was "*His Father's business,*" His "*great gift of God.*" "*Doing justice*" was the Old Testament word; preaching the gospel of the kingdom the New Testament one; and setting things to rights, putting things in order, must, I think, be the modern equivalent. "*He went about preaching the gospel of the kingdom,*" we read, "*and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.*"

By His whole life and doctrine Jesus Christ strove to open and unveil to man the heavenly and divine *order* which lies at the root of all society.

The object of the Christian religion is to make

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men conscious of God's presence always and in everything; to believe in the reign of God, as well as the reign of law; to say of their everyday work and business, "*It's a great gift of God.*"

We want more, I venture to say, of this kind of Christianity nowadays,—a religion which would see God in everything,—"*in our work and in our play, in our politics and our science, our home life and our social life*,"—a religion which would consider it no more profane to speak of Christ on the Stock Exchange, Christ in the Education Office, Christ in the counting-house, Christ in Coventry, than to speak of Christ at the carpenter's bench at Nazareth. The truth is, we manufacture our profanity with great care. We utterly isolate our work from Christ, and then tell Christ that our work is not fit for Him to touch.

The fact is, the so-called religious world habitually takes far too low, too narrow a view of what being religious is. And we have most of us acquiesced in that opinion somewhat too complaisantly.

For example: I heard only the other day of a gentleman—an exceedingly intelligent gentleman in

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most respects—who had actually withdrawn his name from the Committee of the Working Men's Club and Institute Union, because, as he said, "*the movement had no definite religious aspect.*"

Now, what in the world was that gentleman's conception of religion?

I believe his own explanation was something of this kind. Originally, he had joined the Union with a general idea that he was doing good by supporting a Society for promoting, in various ways, the social and moral welfare of the working classes. Subsequently, however, he discovered the Society's method of working to be entirely secular, and not at all religious;—that is to say, that although its programme suggested such things as the establishment of clubs for purposes of recreation, of mutual sympathy, and friendly intercourse, the promotion of classes for mutual improvement and instruction, not a word was said about spiritual agencies, such as Bible-classes, and prayer-meetings, and attendance at the public means of grace. Accordingly, he withdrew his countenance from the Society.

Now I am afraid that gentleman is by no means

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alone in his opinion. Indeed I think he represents a very large segment of society, especially in that division of his of human affairs into things spiritual and things secular.

It is a good thing that the majority of men's actions in such matters are generally very much in advance of their creeds. For is it not very evident that the common opinion is this? That mankind in the mass—in the proportion of thousands to one—have quite failed to attain to anything of what is called true religion. In labour, in commerce, in law, in medicine, in literature, in sculpture, in painting, poetry, music, is it not the constant doctrine or implication of the pulpit, that there is no religion, no spiritual virtue, nothing accordant with the gospel of Christ? Men in the midst of business and daily work may *attain* to a Divine life; but are not the pursuits themselves regarded as having nothing, strictly speaking, to do with religious life, as having in them no elements of spiritual good—as having in them no tendency to advance religion and goodness in the world? This life, the life that is, is laid under a dark ban. "Not religious" is the summary

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phrase which is written across man's secular and industrial life, as if not religious meant in the least degree the same thing as irreligious. Against this division of human life we most earnestly protest.

Life is one. You have no right to say to people social life, secular life, industrial life is one thing, and spiritual life, religious life is quite another. And man is one. You cannot dismember his soul, and divide it in halves, and so contrive that part of it shall be kept for secular work, and part for religious work, that one half shall be used when he is buying and selling on a week-day, and the other half when he is praying or singing on Sunday.

I think it was Mr. Justice Stephen who said the other day very truly: "*Every act is spiritual, every power is spiritual. Whether a man is saying his prayers, or buying an estate, it is he the spirit or soul which prays or buys.*"

And if we are to have a spiritual religion, which is only another way of saying a real one, it must be a religion which will be just as much present with us, influencing our conduct when we are buying an

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estate as when we are saying our prayers. Religion must not be with us what Milton calls in one of his tracts "*a dividual movable*," a thing that can be carried abroad, or left behind at home, or more likely perhaps in church with the hymn-books and hassocks, as occasion may require.

The true religion is the religion which really helps on human progress, using that word in its truest and highest sense. Whatever helps to carry out God's intentions for man, co-operates with God's design, works towards His ideal, must be religious.

In a word holiness is help, and sin is hindrance. Does not holy mean helpful—the Holy Spirit, the Helpful Spirit? The fruits of the Holy Spirit, it is true, are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, patience, goodness. But as it has been truly pointed out: "*They are the fruits of the Spirit in whatever forms they are likely to be found, whether the love is the love of a woman nursing a fretful child, or the longsuffering is that of the man harassed and worried with the vexing details of business, or the gentleness is that of the doctor following the dark mazes of a*

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fever, or the patience is that of the mechanic fitting the joints and valves of a steam engine." The Holy Spirit is the Helpful Spirit.

"*A servant with this clause*"—as quaint old George Herbert's lines go—

> "*A servant with this clause*
> *Makes drudgery divine,*
> *Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,*
> *Makes that and the action fine.*"

The spirit of helpfulness underlies every other principle whatever in the religious life. In God's plan for the world every man's help is needed, every man has his fit place, and every man's work has its due influence on the final result. It is not the philanthropist and the missionary and the religious recluse who alone co-operate with God's design; but every man, who, toiling in an honest calling, does his work in a pious and conscientious spirit, and recognizes his daily business, whatever it may be, as "*a great gift of God.*"

Perhaps by this time some of you may be inclined to say this is not our view of religion. Well, I am very sorry. But we will not quarrel about that.

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Is it your view of your daily work? Take it in that light, and consider whether such a belief as I have tried to describe would not have a very practical, a very *religious* result on the conduct of your lives, if sincerely held and conscientiously followed.

Let me illustrate my meaning by a practical consideration.

England, during the last year or two, has been suffering from great trade depression. In Coventry, as elsewhere, doubtless that fact has been brought home to the heart and the pocket of many a business man. Well, those who have made a study of such questions tell you that the great cause of this depression has been over-trading and over-production, that that is the great evil, and that it must be avoided in future. I do not say, for I do not know, and if I did this would hardly be the place to express an opinion, whether this has been the great evil or not. But this I do venture to say, that if this has been the evil, it will probably not be avoided in future. And why, you ask?

Because there is an evil beneath the evil alleged:

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and that is an excessive desire for property, an eager passion for "*making a fortune*," as it is called, in a few years.

"*Ah!*" perhaps you say, "*that is an old pulpit cry! We who are sensible business men have often had to listen to wholesale denunciations of wealth and riches, and so far from always accepting them as just, we have very often felt ourselves right in resenting them as the mere conventional tirades of ignorance and inexperience.*"

No doubt you have often been right in this respect.

No teacher — still to discriminate — who was wise would have any right to indulge in any such denunciation of riches. He ought to know how necessary the accumulation of wealth has been to the progress of civilization. He ought to know that so far from that accumulation being necessarily the root of all evil, it has been something very much the reverse. In fact, many of the virtues of which Christianity makes her boast are in reality quite as much owing to the development of commerce and industry as to the direct teaching of Christianity.

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Truthfulness, veracity, fidelity to engagements, thrift, order, sobriety, moderation, self-restraint, patient industry are all forms of virtue, fostered and promoted by the trading or industrial spirit.

But although the Christian teacher may grant all this and more, he cannot blind himself to the terrible influences which the abundance and love of earthly possession exercise too often in enervating the soul, and incapacitating it for all high enterprise and self-denying effort.

Is not the Christian teacher bound to denounce quite as unmercifully as Christ Himself the rich man whose riches "*blind him to the far higher value of spiritual aims and intellectual enjoyments: whose luxury and lavish expenditure make life difficult for all around him: whose ostentation is an evil and a temptation to those who take him for their model: to whom wealth is not a grand means, a solemn trust, and a grave responsibility, but merely a source of sensual indulgence and vacant worthlessness*"?

Can the Christian teacher in these days be said to be doing his duty when in face of the daily revelations of our courts of law, fastening their

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stigma on names hitherto held in honour, the crooked balance sheets, the cruel adulteration, the lying advertisement, he is silent on the undue passion for wealth? He may not know much perhaps of business life, and what are technically called commercial transactions, but I daresay he knows enough to be able to say that at a certain point speculation ought to be called by another name—that it should be called theft, and theft of the most evil sort. For it has been truly said: "*Theft involving deliberative intellect and absence of passion is the purest type of wilful iniquity.*"

Now don't you think it would make some difference to the conduct of the business man if, as he read the money articles in his newspaper to-morrow morning, something of Caleb Garth's spirit could come over his breakfast-table meditations: if he had learnt to say to himself now and then—"*This business of mine is a great gift of God, it brings with it great material gains, but also do not let me forget great moral responsibilities—it is a means not merely of laying up a store of wealth for my own selfish enjoyment, but a means of helping on God's plan for*

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the general wealth of the world. He has appointed industry, action, effort, to be the spring of improvement; let me strive therefore to gain this end with wisdom and moderation. For others, business may be a mere expedient to gain a fortune, a race run for a prize —a game played for a great stake when success hangs upon the cast of a die; for me may it rather be a training ground of virtue, a school where lessons are to be learned for eternity"?

Don't you think, I say, that such meditations as these would make themselves felt in the subsequent transactions of the week?

And not only the immediate future, but the whole course of life, and its end would, I venture to think, gain a new character under the inspiration of such thoughts.

Strive then, I beseech you, to gain this sense of your daily work, as a "*great gift of God.*" Strive to be "*downright time-servers,*" in the best and highest sense, men determined at least that their work, whatever it may be, however humble or however lofty, shall be so done as to help on the world's progress towards the very distant

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it may be, but never uncertain final victory of good.

Believe me, man can have no higher inspiration than that—to be a fellow-worker with God.

And as to the Reward. Well, perhaps you had better not think too much about that. The best workers are never those, remember, who are always thinking about their wages. Indeed, the best work never was yet done for wages, but for love only, the only true reward after all of work being more work. "*Heaven itself is only work to surer issues.*" You know what the poet sings of a noble man dead:

> "*How can we doubt that for one so true,*
> *There must be other nobler work to do?*"

Live your life then truly and well, not for wages, but for love.

Live for Love. Love of God, love of Christ. Think of your Master. You can trust *Him*. *He* will not leave you out in the cold and darkness at last: but if you live a brave life of righteousness here, He will welcome you to that Home

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beyond with the sweet smile of love and the wreath of immortality.

"Live and love,
Doing both nobly, because lowlily.
Live and work, strongly because patiently,
And for the deed of death, trust it to God.
That it be well done, unrepented of,
And not to loss."

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Sermon III.

THE KINGDOM WITHIN AND WITHOUT.

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"*The kingdom of heaven is* within, *but we must also make it* without. *There is no public opinion yet, it has to be created, as to not creating blunders for want of knowledge: good intentions are supposed enough; yet blunders—organized blunders—do more mischief than crimes . . . . To study how to do good work, as a matter of life and death; to 'agonise' so as to obtain practical wisdom to do it, there is little or no public opinion enforcing this—condemning the want of it. Until you can create such a public opinion little good will be done, except by accident or by accidental individuals. But when we have such a public opinion, we shall not be far from having a 'kingdom of heaven' externally, even here.*"

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

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III.

THE KINGDOM WITHIN AND WITHOUT.

"*Thy kingdom come . . . . on earth!*"—MATT. vi. 10.

MR. RUSKIN in certain letters to the clergy, which some of you may have very likely read in a late number of the *Contemporary Review*, has been showing what very mistaken ideas most of us entertain of the true nature of the pastoral office. He tells us that the clergy are far too much occupied in trying "*to get wicked poor people to go to church*," to the neglect of their real work, which is "*to keep wicked rich people out of church.*"

Great moral teachers, I suppose, are always more

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or less paradoxical. And so, if we can only profit by the lesson he really desires to teach us, we may afford, I think, to pardon Mr. Ruskin the form in which he has chosen to convey it. At any rate, it may not be altogether waste of time this evening if we try to put Mr. Ruskin's lesson in a somewhat more courteous form, and instead of asking ourselves "*Why wicked poor people do not go to church?*" we ask, "*Why other people, rich or poor, good or bad, do?*"

What, after all, is the object of going to church? Why, for example, do you come here to-night?

That is a simple question, and should not be difficult to answer.

And yet I think it is very doubtful whether the individual members of our Christian congregations often do ask themselves this question, "*What is the exact object of the congregation? What is the exact purpose for which I am accustomed to sit in this pew more or less regularly?*"

We have come here to-night to perform what we call Divine service. Now service surely implies hard work.

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What hard work have you and I been performing to-night?

It is true we have joined together in a great many prayers to God, and that no doubt is hard work enough, if we have really been in earnest about the matter; for spiritual earnestness implies intense concentration of thought, and concentrated thought is very hard work indeed.

But granted that we have strenuously prayed and sung hymns, and listened to the Lessons, in what true sense can we call that Divine service, serving, working for God? Prayer, at any rate, means, for most people at least, just the opposite of that; means that they want God to work for them, not that they want to work for God. Begging is not serving, and God likes mere beggars, I should fancy, just as little as we do. He wants honest servants, real workers, not beggars; men who have learnt at least that word of their Master, when He said that to serve God consisted not in saying (or even singing, accompanied by the best music), "*Lord, Lord! but in doing the will of the Father.*"

Or suppose I put the question in another form,

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What do you consider to be the object of the Christian Church?

If you each answered quite honestly, I expect your answers would be wonderfully diverse. And that question evidently includes the other; for the object of going to church can only be to fulfil the object of the Church. What, then, is the object of the Church of Christ?

For my own part it always seems to me that the best answer to that question is to be found in those words in which the Evangelist sums up the work of Christ in this world: "*Jesus went about preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.*"

There are those, of course, who prefer speaking of the Gospel which Jesus Christ preached, and the Gospel which the Church of Christ has, therefore, to preach, as the Gospel of "*salvation*," not as the Gospel of the "*kingdom.*" But what do you mean by salvation?

"*To be saved*" means one of two things in the popular mind. Either it is to be taken as meaning

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salvation from future punishment in the world to come, or salvation from sin in the world that is.

Amongst instructed Christians doubtless there may be few nowadays who willingly accept that idea of salvation which should imply the mere saving of our souls from future torment; yet that conception is certainly not entirely absent from the educated classes; and amongst the non-educated and ill-instructed it is, if not perhaps the only, certainly the leading idea conveyed by the word. Indeed, I am sure we cannot well over-estimate the evil that this most incomplete conception of salvation has had upon the religious life and the moral conduct of thousands.

It has been my duty to stand by the bedside of not a few dying people of the ill-instructed classes, and I must honestly confess that upon more than one occasion I have been not a little surprised at the calm confidence evidently felt by those who stood by, neighbours and relatives, that all was as it should be with the soul hovering on the brink of eternity. God forbid that I should seem for a moment to cast a doubt on the infinite love of our Heavenly Father.

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Whatever else may be doubtful, *that* cannot fail any one of us, either in this world or any world to come. Hope that all may yet be well, I should have no right, I believe, to quench by the death-bed of even the unrepentant. But the calm confidence that all is now as it should be, that at any rate cannot be right. When we inquire what it is that has given strength to that confidence, we shall generally find that it is the utterance on the part of the sufferer of some few words, perhaps "*Lord, have mercy upon me*," gasped during the last moments that life yet lingers. God forbid, I repeat, that I should seem to doubt that that prayer is not heard by Him whose ear is never closed

But surely we do wrong to foster the idea that all that Christ came to give us of salvation was what was gained by that death-bed prayer. But that is the only idea, I have often felt, entertained by those to whose confidence I have alluded.

The only conception of salvation to which hundreds of people attain is one corresponding to that idea of conversion which holds so prominent a place in some theologies. To be saved is to be converted. And

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conversion is a sudden catastrophe, so to speak, in the soul, as strange and mysterious to all former experience as would be some mystery of magnetism, an electric shock, to one who had never before felt it. Salvation is thus regarded as a mysterious something imposed upon us from outside, on account of our faith, as a reward for believing something, or even, as alas! it would appear in the cases to which I have alluded, as a reward for saying something.

Or look at the matter in another aspect.

I happened to be talking the other day to an exceedingly good and amiable lady, when she startled me by the following curious and naïve remark :—"*I don't think I am in the least what you would call a really religious person ; to be frank, I don't feel a bit religious. And yet I don't feel as if I were very wicked. I am sure I should be very miserable if I were to do an untrue or dishonest thing. I wouldn't hurt a living creature by deed or word if I could help it.*"

Now it is quite plain that in that lady's idea religion is in itself something quite different, quite distinguishable, at any rate, from what the world

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would ordinarily call "goodness." "To be good" and "to be religious" were evidently not regarded as anything like identical phrases. Now is that a very uncommon idea? To say that any one is religious no doubt carries with it some idea of a character for goodness. But to say that a man is a good man does not equally carry with it as a necessity an idea of religion. "*The state of salvation*" which belongs to the religious man is evidently regarded as something in its nature different to the state of goodness which belongs to the simply good man. There is something radically wrong in this distinction. Is it not a course most unreal and misleading to speak of perfectly similar characters or perfectly similar actions as "religious" on the one hand, and simply "good" or "moral" on the other, as one is speaking of the characters or actions of Christians or non-Christians, intending those terms to carry with them, moreover, a clear indication of relative merit as apparent to the eye of God?

When will people really understand that what Christ came into the world to do, was not to teach men a new way of being good, or doing good, but to

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supply us with a new and powerful motive for both being and doing good in the old way? Religion has been defined by Mr. Matthew Arnold "*as morality tinged with emotion*," and we may accept the definition, if he will allow us to further define "emotion" as the energising motive to right action which is supplied by "*the constraining love of Christ.*"

I hope you will not think that I am leaving all this time the question with which we set out with only a partial answer. Let us go back to the words with which our Master Himself was accustomed to speak of His mission and work. "*And Jesus went about preaching the gospel of the kingdom.*"

A gospel of salvation no doubt it was, but did not the good news consist mainly in this, that Jesus Christ revealed to man the Divine order under which He was living, proclaimed a fatherly will as the origin of all life in the universe, exhibited in His own sacrificial life and death a perfect conformity to that will, announced the presence of a Spirit, seeking to raise, reform, educate man, to emancipate him from

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his animal and selfish nature, to deliver, to *save* him from the suspicions and vanities and unrighteousness which set him at enmity with his neighbours and his God? The gospel of the kingdom has this good news, at least for man, that notwithstanding all the existing injustice and unrighteousness, notwithstanding all the prevailing disorder and cruelty and oppression in the world, notwithstanding all the evils that we see around us eating into the heart of society—our ignorance, our disease, our drunkenness, our social impurity, our pauperism, our crime,—that notwithstanding all these there is yet over all a Divine Ruler, who looks down upon the earth with no careless eye, who as a loving Father watches over His creatures, yearns to deliver them from the misery and disorder into which, through wilfulness, they have fallen, and who, because He has loved them through all, has sent His Son into the world, to reconcile it unto Himself, to bring it back again to its lost allegiance, who promised to send His Holy Spirit, not this time to brood with creative energy over a material world formless and void, but to call out of social and moral chaos a kingdom of

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righteousness, of peace, of joy, of order. The gospel of the kingdom, the good news of a present all-ruling, all-loving God,—this is the message of Jesus Christ.

In a word, the object of the Christian religion is to make men conscious of God's presence always and everywhere. That is perhaps a definition of Christianity which might not quite satisfy the theologians. But that is the definition of one of God's truest workers, who, though she is not a theologian, many of us, I doubt not, would trust for a definition of real practical religion far more than many theologians.

"*Christianity*," said Florence Nightingale not long ago,—"*Christianity is to see God in everything, to find Him out in everything, in the order or laws as of His moral or spiritual, so of His political or social, and so of His physical worlds . . . to Christ God was everything—to us He seems nothing—almost if not quite nothing, or if He is anything, He is only the God of Sundays, and only the God of Sundays as far as going to what we call our prayers, not the God of our week-days, our business and our play, our politics*

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and our science, our home life and our social life; our House of Commons, our Government, our post-office and correspondence—such an enormous item in these days—our Foreign Office and our Indian Office . . . . The kingdom of heaven is within, but we must also make it without."

There I think you have the answer to the question with which we set out. "*The kingdom of heaven is within, but we must also make it without.*" To realise the kingdom of heaven within, and then to make it without, that is the true Divine service. That is the work which you and I as members of a Christian congregation have got to perform. If we do not succeed in helping one another to do that, we palpably fail in accomplishing the chief object of our coming to this place. If the Church above all else is not a centre of help it is utterly useless and absurd.

What are you doing then, as a Christian congregation, to make the kingdom of heaven *without* in this place, in this parish?

What are you doing, if I may take those great social problems, to which I have just alluded, as an example,

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what are you doing to diminish that great cloud of pauperism which broods over this richest of the countries of the earth, not merely by giving away money, but by learning and teaching something of those great economic laws which help people to make money and to save it? What are you doing to abolish drunkenness with all its foul brood of folly and sensuality and crime, not merely by preaching up pure water, but by preaching down bad air, and bad houses, and bad beer? What are you doing to solve the problem of social purity, not only by drawing aside the clean robe of your respectability from the defiling touch of the outcast woman, but by guarding your own family hearth from the polluting approach of the profligate man? What are you doing to soften the bitterness of social revolt, and to heal the almost standing feud between capital and labour, not merely by preaching to the labouring class the great duty of content in that state of life in which they may please to find themselves but by asking yourself how far you may have contributed towards putting them there, and what you may be doing, by larger and

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more vivid conceptions of social obligations, to raise the moral tone of commerce and trade and manufacture?

Let us ask these questions both as a congregation and as individuals. And if you ask me where you are to begin this work, I will not answer you in any other words than these—"*As you save so shall you be saved*," and by telling you this legend of the Holy Grail, whereof the lesson may be well left to each man's own heart to find. A certain knight left England to search for the sacred cup in foreign lands. As he passed from his castle gate an old man cried to him for help. Absorbed in his great hope the knight heeded him not but passed on. He wandered far, and fought in many wars and many lands, he helped many and endured much, but found not the sacred cup. At last, disheartened, and in despair of ever gazing on the sacred vision, he turned his steps towards home. At the gate of his castle the same sufferer cried once more to him for help, "*I perish with thirst*." The knight dismounted and hastened to bring a cup of cold water. He held the half-clad sufferer in his arms, raised his head, and

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proffered the water to the parched lips. And even as he raised the cup it sparkled into a gem, and the knight saw in his hand the Holy Grail—flushed with the true blood of Christ.

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Sermon IV.

THE CONTAGION OF TRUST.

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" Better trust all and be deceived,
And rue that trust and that deceiving,
Than ne'er to trust, where, if believed,
One had been blest by thy believing."

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IV.

THE CONTAGION OF TRUST.

"*Charity believeth all things.*"—1 Cor. xiii. 17.

I WAS reading the other night Shakespeare's play of *Julius Cæsar*. Most of you I have no doubt will remember the character of Brutus in that play. There are few purer or loftier spirits in the whole range of Shakespearean creation. Two striking lines uttered by Brutus just before his death suggested to me the subject about which I propose to speak to you for a short time this evening. You will find the words if you care to turn to your Shakespeare when you go

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home, quite at the end of the play. They are these,—

> *"Countrymen,*
> *My heart doth joy that yet in all my life,*
> *I found no man but he was true to me."*

Now the question which occurred to me when I read those lines, and which I would venture to ask you to put to yourselves, is this:—

"Why was it that Brutus in all his life had never found a man untrue to him? Was it that his experience of human life was exceptional, that circumstances had thrown him only among men of warm generosity and transparent truthfulness? or, was the secret to be found in his own character? Was it that before the childlike trustfulness and simplicity of heart of 'that noblest Roman of them all,' even otherwise faithless men were shamed into fidelity? Was it that before his grand innocence and simpleness of soul even meditated treachery was disarmed? Did the very frankness of Brutus' trust, the very force of his expectation of 'good faith' in others, tend to create that virtue, where it did not already exist?"

That at any rate is the explanation which com-

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mends itself to my mind. I take then as my subject to-night The Contagious Power of Trust.

We are accustomed to speak of the object of Jesus Christ in coming into the world as "*the salvation of sinners.*" The gospel histories tell us how He undertook to bring about that object. They contain several examples of the conversion of the fallen. Did it ever strike you that one element, so to speak, in the peculiarity of Christ's reforming power lay in His marvellous exhibition of this virtue of trust? In every case that I can think of, almost the first step taken by Christ in the reclamation of a sinner is *to trust Him.*

Take an instance. You remember the story which tells of the recovery of a man named Zaccheus from a life of worldliness to a life of godliness. Zaccheus was a publican. A successful member, as it would appear, of that class; grown rich on the dishonest spoils of his office. A rogue and a swindler, living in prosperity among the victims of his rapacity, and the dupes of his deceit. In some way he had heard of Christ, and is curious to see Him. Perhaps his conscience was at times uneasy at the thought of

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his ill-gotten gains. Any way he finds himself one day lingering on the edge of a crowd in the hope of catching some of the words of the Great Teacher. Anxious to gain a glimpse of the Preacher's face, and being short of stature, he climbs up into a way-side tree, that he may look at Christ as He passes by. He does see Christ, but Christ also sees him. With one stroke, as it were, the sinner's soul is conquered. And what was the instrument of victory? Here are the Gospel words: "*And when Jesus came to that place, He looked up and saw him, and said, Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must dine at thy house.*" They were simple words, and yet here I take it is the secret of Christ's power over this sinner's soul. *He went to dinner with Zaccheus without an invitation.* It was a strange method of conversion, yet it was Divine. Not through the fiery eloquence, or the impressive exhortation of the Preacher, but through the simple exhibition of a generous confidence, of a frank belief and trust in the good points which are never quite absent probably from any sinner's soul, but only lie dormant and undiscovered, did Zaccheus gain

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the wish and the courage to be other than he was. The trustfulness of Christ gave, as by a contagion of virtue, a new soul to this sinner.

That is a specimen of the redeeming power of Christ. You may take any other similar incident in the Gospel story, and I think I am right in saying you will find the same characteristic method. *The Contagion of Trust*, the spirit of charity believing all things, of love trusting all, of hope confiding in the best side of every man, is, as I take it, an essential element in all Christ's teaching. You will find it perhaps most prominently in the most prominent document of Christianity—the Sermon on the Mount.

"*Oh, but then*," somebody says, "*you must not take the Sermon on the Mount as a code of morality which can be literally put into practice under the conditions of modern society. Everybody knows that the Sermon on the Mount is an ideal document. Its paradoxical maxims and counsels of perfection cannot be taken as furnishing good working rules for nineteenth-century business life.*"

Well, the objections of practical business folk are

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not to be despised. But mark. I do not ask you whether you are able, whether you *can* act out, to the letter, all these maxims. But what I do ask you is this,—"*Don't you wish you could?* Don't you wish that the spirit which underlies such actions as Christ commends when He speaks of '*turning your left cheek to him that has smitten your right*,' of giving your cloak to him that has taken your coat were more often present in your heart than it is?" You may know that the ideal He sets before you is a lofty one, impossible even to realise in any place short of heaven.

But the real question to ask is this: Do you wish, when you think about it, when you are at your best,—do you wish, I say, that the ideal was less lofty than it is? Do you think that this world would be any the worse place for being a little more like heaven?

Very well then. If you accept Christ's teaching as a lofty ideal, you will work not away from it, but towards it, as much as you can, will you not? Some of you, of course, will be able to go further than others on this path. But all of us, in so far

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as we are followers of Christ, must go in this direction.

Curiously enough as I wrote this there came to me in the columns of the daily paper an illustration of the point I am trying to impress upon you. One day last week the *Daily News* contained a letter from a Paris correspondent, in which a description was given of a new play which is being prepared for representation there. The drama is founded on Victor Hugo's novel of "*Les Miserables*," a book which some of you no doubt may have read in its English translation. I have always regarded the poet's conception in that book as a very grand one. He wished to exhibit human wretchedness and sin in its most harrowing aspect, and yet to show how one of the most abandoned of wretches may overcome the temptations of misery and crime, and struggle to a position of honour by the godlike force of an honest purpose. In carrying out his design the author has shown—it is a triumph of genius for which we cannot be too thankful—what an immense power a literal compliance with the command of Christ—"*If any man ask thy cloak, let him*

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have thy coat also"—might exercise in the reformation of a criminal. The hero is changed from a ruffian to one of the noblest of men by the exhibition of that redeeming power of trust, of which I speak, on the part of a bishop from whom he had stolen a basket of plate.

I must tell you the main incident of the story.

Jean Valjean, a man who has been sentenced to five years' penal servitude for stealing a loaf, is re-sentenced several times for trying to make his escape from the hulks. So that altogether he remains in confinement nineteen years. "*Year by year his soul became more and more withered, slowly but fatally. A dry soul must have a dry eye, and on leaving the hulks nineteen years had elapsed since he had shed a tear.*" On his release a yellow passport is given him, and he sets out to find his way on foot to the town which has been appointed for his residence. He wanders out into the world to find only too soon that liberation is not deliverance, that though he has left the gaol behind, he has not left condemnation. Everywhere the yellow pass

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denounces him. Every honest man's door is closed to the convict. His first night of freedom finds him without shelter and without food. Footsore and heart-broken he sinks down under a church porch. An old lady who is leaving the church sees him stretched out in the darkness, questions him, and advises him to knock at a house over the way where the bishop lives. The good Bishop Myriel has the saintly virtues of a Vincent de Paul. He is seated at supper when the unkempt savage-looking convict enters. He makes no difficulty, however, about offering the galley-slave hospitality at his table, or giving him a bed afterwards. His house was not his, he was accustomed to say, but Christ's. His door did not ask a man who entered whether he had a name, but if he had a sorrow; if he was suffering, if he was hungry, if he was thirsty, then he was welcome. He had divined that under the shaggy exterior of this outcast, who tells his story with brutal frankness, there is a soul to be saved. Jean Valjean eats and goes to bed. Toward the middle of the night he awakens. He thinks of many things, but one thought continually expels the

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rest. He remembers the massive silver plate he had seen on his host's table. He struggles with the temptation. His host had called him "*Sir*," and had trusted him. But his heart had been too long hardened. Finally he yields to the temptation, rises on tiptoe, gropes his way to where the valuables are kept, makes them up in a bundle, and walks out of the house.

A few hours later he is brought back by the police, who have examined his bundle and found the plate with the bishop's arms. The old bishop rises to meet the group as they enter. "*Ah*," he says to the convict, "*I am glad to see you. But I gave you the candlesticks too, which are also silver, and will fetch you two hundred francs. Why did you not take them away with the rest?*" He tells the gendarmes that they have made a mistake, that they may set the convict free, that they may retire. Then the bishop goes up to the cowering wretch puts his hand on his shoulder, and says,—"*Jean Valjean, my brother, never forget that you have promised to employ this money in becoming an honest man. You no longer belong to evil but to good. I*

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withdraw your soul from black thoughts and the spirit of perdition, and give it to God."

This scene acts upon Jean Valjean like the vision which Paul saw on the road to Damascus. One more temptation, one more struggle, and the victory is complete, and the evil spirit cast out for ever.

I hope you will not complain that this scene is fictitious. It is real enough, true in all its essentials.

Not that I am unaware of the objection that may be raised to the old bishop's method on the score of what would be called unpracticality. Such objections are very formidable I do not deny. But they are not insuperable. At their strongest they only amount to this—that the old bishop was an ideal Christian. At their weakest they cannot but allow that justice should be tempered by mercy, and that in the treatment of a criminal, *his* interest ought to be considered as well as the interest of society.

We have no time, however, to follow out that special enquiry, interesting as otherwise it would be. I return to the point which I thought the

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illustration likely to enforce. I am sure we do not half enough believe in the virtue of trust as a moral power.

Consider the doctrine in relation to the morality of everyday life. What is it really that is at the root of half our social miseries? Is it not distrust, suspicion, jealousy, want of sympathy, want of confidence between man and man, and between classes of men?

There are those I know who will argue boldly that society is founded solely on self-interest, and that to exchange that principle for one of unbounded confidence and trust, would lead to little short of social catastrophe.

The first half of that statement I utterly deny, the second half is undoubtedly true. But the alternative is not fairly stated.

I utterly deny that the selfish theory of society is the true one. I do not think that self-interest is the only motive of the majority of men. It may be the prominent one I grant you. But other motives do exist, and exist often in apparently the most selfish of men. I believe the appeal to these

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higher motives would not in all cases be so utterly useless as some people appear to imagine. At least of this I am certain—that it is our duty, as Christian people, our solemn duty, to make appeal to those principles and motives more often than we do. It was said of Edward Irving, the founder of the Irvingite sect, that "*he went about making men noble by thinking they were so.*" Of Dr. Arnold the Rugby boys used to say,—"*It is a shame to tell the Doctor a lie, because he always believes you.*"

It was because of that appeal to the good side of human nature, that trust in the good impulses even of evil hearts, that both Edward Irving and Dr. Arnold exercised so great a moral influence. It is to these same impulses you must appeal if you would exert moral influence over your fellows.

And here I think is the hint we want for practical guidance.

The doctrine of trust, remember, is above all things a *moral* power. If you would make trial of its influence, remember its power will fail you, if the moral good of the man you trust is not your first thought. Before you can make a man good

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by trusting him, you must be sure that there is no tinge of selfishness about your wish that he were so. If you would have others less selfish, you must first set the example of being unselfish yourself.

This is the check which will prevent you from mistaking a mere impulse of weak pity or mawkish tolerance of wrong for the Divine instinct of Christian trust.

It is like the check which political economy has taught us we must put on indiscriminate charity. "*To give to him that asketh,*" where to give is to brutalise or degrade, is to give "*a stone for bread, and a serpent for a fish.*"

So also in your exercise of the moral power of trust, you must remember, that although the "*guilelessness of the dove*" is commended by Christ, so also is "*the serpent's wisdom.*"

But now look at this doctrine of trust under a slightly different aspect. There is an industrial morality as well as a social.

Take the example of men brought into close relation by the interests of commerce and industrial enterprise. Trust, confidence, credit, good faith,

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fidelity, these are the very foundation stones of all business.

Mr. Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*, has pointed out that the one respect in which the growth of industrial life has exercised a favourable influence upon morals, has been in the promotion of truth. For although business life affords great temptations to deception and fraud, yet mutual confidence, strict truthfulness, fidelity to engagements, are so transcendently important in all industrial enterprise, that they have acquired almost a new value in the minds of men.

But even here the doctrine of trust may find a much-needed work to do.

I shall make my meaning plainer if I take a personal illustration. Some of you must have read the "Life of Thomas Brassey," the great railway contractor. It is a book which ought to be in the possession of every business man. I know of no one who illustrates more powerfully than he does the contagious moral influence of trust. The secret of his unparalleled success, the foundation of his colossal fortune—two and a half millions, I believe

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—was emphatically his high moral nature. He possessed, of course, great intellectual power, and he was assisted no doubt by favourable circumstances. But no intellectual power, it has been well remarked, or talent for affairs, could have brought within his grasp the vast works which built up his fortune, if it had not been for the remarkable integrity of his character, the wise liberality of his dealings, and above all, the discriminating but absolute trust which he placed in those who worked for him. The devotion and affection of his subordinates was in fact his greatest power. And this arose, his biographer tells us—proving his case by abundant examples—from the quite unbounded confidence which he placed in them, and the liberality and friendliness of his personal bearing. The usual checks and espionage, the commonly-heard business maxims—"*Suspect everyone;*" "*Trust no one farther than you can see him;*" "*Exact your rights rigorously and you will be respected the more;*" "*Everyone for himself, and God for us all*"—are entirely falsified by the experience of this "*great captain of industry.*"

When we think of the immense works carried on

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in every corner of Europe, in India, in South America, in Canada, in Australia, removed from all possibility of supervision, we get some idea of how many and how much he must have trusted. And yet not one single case of deception or fraud is recorded.

Are there any business men here who feel inclined to try Mr. Brassey's plan?

If there are, do not forget when you make the trial to add to all the other checks which your experience of life will teach you to apply this check also.

If you would trust others nobly, see you are noble yourself. For that power of trusting only the right people is God's especial reward and protection to the pure in heart.

One point more and I conclude. I have spoken of the doctrine of trust in relation to social morality, to industrial morality; dare I speak of it in relation to international morality?

If there have been those inclined to press the importance of self-interest before, here at least they will urge the all-importance of its claims.

Yet surely it may be permitted to the Christian

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teacher to ask, Is the time never to come when duty and not merely self-interest, when right and not merely might, when principle and not merely expediency, shall obtain in the wide politics of the nations? Shall the time never come when in the cause of peace, as well as in the cause of war, a nation shall be found ready *to risk something?* Shall self-sacrifice never be as much a principle with the best Christian nations as it is with the best Christian men? Is the doctrine of trust absolutely an impossible element in the morality of nations? *

I at least for one will not believe it, and however much there may be in the present † political outlook calculated to make one despair, yet I cannot change my belief that the progress of society is forwards, and not backwards. Wars in the nineteenth century

* "Self-abdication and isolation, is that a life worthy of England? Are nations no longer allied, as individuals are, by duty? Ought they not to do good and to combat evil? Are they not members of the great human family? Do they not share the life of all? Ought they not to communicate something of their life to all? Can they remain strangers to the common task of leading mankind towards perfection, the realization of the educational plan assigned to humanity?"—MAZZINI.

† 1879.

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have not all been suggested by national greed or national selfishness. There have been examples—it is well at this time we should not forget them—of nations exerting their influence upon other nations, not only in their own interests, but in the service of others; we have seen quarrels that have broken out between nations settled by the mediation of neutral powers; we have seen civil wars arrested, and obstinate disputes settled by arbitration; we have seen a nation imperilling the whole wealth of a great colonial possession to atone for a national crime, and to get rid of a world's scandal; we have seen the same nation paying the way of its army through the very country whose ruler it had come to chastise for an insult to its honour, and to the wonder of other nations not following up its conquest by annexation; we have seen the same nation submitting generously to an award of three millions of money on account of the damage done by a single ship,—an award greatly in excess of what many at the time thought, and which subsequent events have proved, to be a fair compensation,—rather than, by impugning the principle of inter-

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national arbitration, running the risk of putting back the civilization of the world.

International morality, I venture to say, has during the last fifty years been steadily advancing. God grant that that progress is not now to be stayed even for a time. "*To respect scrupulously*," —I quote the words of Lord Derby, uttered not this year, or last, but more than ten years ago—"*To respect scrupulously the rights of other nations, of the weakest as well as of the strongest, and to respect those rights as scrupulously as we would maintain our own; to study to preserve in the first instance the peace of England, and next to that, as far as lies in our power, the peace of Europe and the civilised world; to seek no narrow, no selfish, no exclusive object, but to consider that even our material interests are indissolubly connected with those of neighbouring nations, who are at once our neighbours and our customers; to place our point of honour not in the readiness hastily and impatiently to resent any real or imaginary wrong, but rather in a willingness to submit to the dispassionate arbitration of some competent*

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tribunal, either the claims which we may think we may have upon others, or the claims which others may think they may have upon us—this is the general tenor of the conduct we ought to pursue. . . . If you ask me," he continues, "*what is to be done to supply that which seems to be the great want of the time, namely, a greater degree of mutual confidence between the various great powers of the world, I would say frankly, if anybody were to put that question to me, I am not ready for an answer. The man who can solve that problem will be, perhaps, the greatest benefactor to the community which the present generation has seen.*"

It may be long, my friends, before that benefactor appears. Neither Rousseau's nor Jeremy Bentham's scheme for perpetual peace have yet become in any way practicable. We may have to look for that scheme, for that solution, for that benefactor, in a very different direction. We may be, as philosophers tell us, in an age of science. We have not yet, I trust, altogether passed out of an age of faith. There is still something that lies beyond schemes and systems. To see God in history, in modern history, as well as

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in ancient, must be the part of any one who reads and believes his Bible, who prays daily that prayer of his Lord's, "*Thy kingdom come . . . on earth!*"

Faith believes a true conception of human life is to be found somewhere, a goal to which the world is ever tending; a Divine order in which "*God fulfils Himself*," not only "*in many ways*," but in the one way of perfectness:—

> "*Then shall all men's good*
> *Be each man's rule, and universal peace*
> *Lie like a shaft of light across the land,*
> *And like a lane of beams athwart the sea*
> *Through all the circle of the golden year.*"

Hazell, Watson, and Viney, Printers, London and Aylesbury

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